

3.0 Existing Conditions

3.1 Adaptive Reuse Areas

The Reformatory and Penitentiary adaptive reuse area consists of 79 acres located along Silverbrook Road between Lorton Road and Hooes Road. The site includes more than 70 buildings. As shown in Figure 5, the site is largely developed by existing buildings and limited parking, limited recreation space. The following section provides a description of the contributing buildings that will impact the reuse of the reformatory and penitentiary areas that comprise the Reformatory and Penitentiary Area.



Figure 5: Existing Structures within the Reformatory and Penitentiary Area

3.1.1 Reformatory Complex

The reformatory consists primarily of one and two-story buildings arranged around a central green quadrangle. The evenly spaced buildings are symmetrical and designed in the Colonial Revival style. Observation towers, industrial buildings, facility maintenance structures and administrative buildings are all located in proximity to the quadrangle.

Construction of the reformatory began in the early 1920's. Including the three guard towers and the structures associated with the baseball field, there are 41 structures within the reformatory complex that are listed as contributing to the significance of the proposed historic district. See Figure 6 for a list of the contributing structures.

Architect Snowden Ashford incorporated the quadrangle plan to make supervision easier and to alleviate the need for walls and watchtowers (Oakey 1988; 130). The reformatory complex was designed to accommodate the majority of prisoners in open dormitories; punishment rooms and disciplinary dormitories were present for those who violated the honor system.

In an effort to use industrial education as a tool for rehabilitation, shops for carpentry, broom making, plumbing, baking, metalworking, and other vocations were constructed behind the dormitory quadrangle. In an attempt to recreate society within the prison, assembly halls, hospitals, educational and recreational facilities were constructed in conjunction with the reformatory.

Twelve dormitory buildings, an auditorium/ hospital and a gymnasium comprise the north and south sides of the quadrangle. There is a large dining hall at the east end and an administration building on the west side. Although the gymnasium and the administration building were constructed after the period of significance, they are considered contributing resources because their location and design echo the historic plan. Behind the east end of the quadrangle there is a consistently massed and sited row of buildings originally used as industrial shops. Additionally, there is a series of buildings located to the north and south of the dining hall, outside of the quadrangle. The massing and placement of these buildings form repetitive patterns. There is a network of steam tunnels underneath the central quadrangle of the reformatory.

Retaining the original design form and materials, the building located on the western edge of the quadrangle has a higher degree of remaining integrity. Although still retaining the original form, the building on the eastern edge of the quadrangle has replacement windows and a modern entrance door. Both buildings retain their original slate roofs.

Side-gabled, gable-end with parapets and flat roof forms are all found within the reformatory complex. There are dormers on the dining hall and many of the dormitory buildings feature gable cornice returns. Roofing materials vary from building to building; there is a mixture of original slate and asphalt shingles.

Several additional character-defining details are intact. Buildings within the quadrangle include arches above entrances and a number of industrial buildings feature lintels over openings. Additionally, the use of terra cotta in the bakery cornice and historic metal entry door surrounds found on several of the dormitories, contribute to the significance of this sub area.

Figure 6: Contributing Structures in the Reformatory Area

REFORMATORY AREA				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
R-02	Gymnasium	1959	10,455	Y
R-03	Dorm #24/Dental	1931	19,740	Y
R-04	Dorm #8	1920	3,978	Y
R-05	Dorm #9	1922	4,580	Y
R-06	Dorm #10	1924	4,580	Y
R-07	Dorm #11	1926	4,580	Y
R-08	Dorm #12	1928	4,580	Y
R-09	Dorm #13	1930	4,580	Y
R-10	Dorm #7	1920	3,978	Y
R-11	Dorm #6	1922	4,580	Y
R-12	Dorm #5	1924	4,580	Y
R-13	Dorm #4	1926	4,580	Y
R-14	Dorm #3	1928	4,580	Y
R-15	Dorm #2	1930	4,580	Y
R-16	Officer Assembly Room	1921	3,294	Y
R-17	Control Cells (46 ea.)	1921	10,536	Y
R-18	Dorm #1	1921	5,224	Y
R-19	Programs/OFACM	1931	8,580	Y
R-20	Dorm #19/OFACM Shop	1931	10,020	Y
R-21	Dorm #22	1931	4,080	Y
R-22	Dorm #23	1931	4,080	Y
R-23	Laundry Annex	1930	5,010	Y
R-24	Dorm #14	1921	5,124	Y
R-25	Dorm #21	1921	5,124	Y
R-26	Linen Issue	1931	5,917	Y
R-27	Dining & Kitchen	1924	22,792	Y
R-28	Laundry	1930	7,338	Y
R-29	Ed. Svcs.	1940	4,560	Y
R-30	OFACM (Steam Ht. Plt.)	1932	6,609	Y
R-38	OFACM Shops	1934	5,840	Y
R-40	Ed. Svcs.	1941	6,020	Y

REFORMATORY AREA				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
R-41	Dormitory #20	1934	3,034	Y
R-44	Chapel	1960	22,137	N
R-54	Tower #1	1940	1,440	Y
R-55	Tower #2	1940	726	Y
R-57	Tower #4	1940	353	Y
R-61	Tower #8	1940	227	Y
R-62	Tower #9	1940	457	Y
R-63	Tower #10	1940	311	Y
R-66	Dormitory	1939	37,998	Y
R-67	Administration Building	1952	31,220	Y
R-70	Dormitory #15	1938	7,500	Y
R-71	Dormitory #17	1938	7,500	Y
R-72	Dormitory #16	1938	7,500	Y
R-73	Dormitory #18	1938	7,500	Y
R-76	OFACM (Storage Shed)	1940	437	Y
R-84	Storage, Program	1940	3,750	Y
R-85	OFACM (Paint Shop)	1940	1,050	Y
R-86	Security & Storage	1940	480	Y
R-105	Baseball Field Bleachers	1940	8,250	Y
R-106	Boxing Area	1940	628	Y
R-Storage		1940	553	Y
Totals			347,150	

The original building massing and placement is still evident despite a series of alternations to the original brickwork that occurred over the years. For example, physical evidence indicates the former fenestration patterns and arcade design, although several of the arches along the arcade and within the building facades have been bricked in. Originally the dormitories had small, square windows, placed very high along the wall. Subsequently, every third window of several dormitory buildings was altered, changing the fenestration to reflect a high, high, low pattern. By contrast, several buildings within the reformatory complex retain their original fenestration and original large windows. The intact large round arched windows in the steam plant, for example, dramatically enhance the otherwise utilitarian building.

Although there are no walls, the complex is surrounded by brick observation towers. There are two distinctive tower types associated with the reformatory complex, the square plan and the rectangular plan. The square towers are brick construction and have a pyramidal roof. The simplified rectangular towers consist of an open metal structure with an enclosed room. Another feature of the penitentiary and reformatory complex is a traditional baseball playing field.

A key element of the reformatory is the view experienced from this complex. Views to the west are of the [future] golf course that is being developed by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Views to the south include meadows, woodlands and the Laurel Hill house.



Figure 8: Interior View of Reformatory Quadrangle



Figure 7: View of Officers' Quarters



Figure 9: View of Future Golf Course from Reformatory

3.1.2 Penitentiary Complex

By 1930, the construction of a penitentiary became necessary due to changes in the penal philosophy and the type of prisoner lodged at the Lorton facility. Surrounded by a high wall and guard towers, the penitentiary complex was intended to provide a high degree of security. See Figure 10 for a list of the contributing structures.

Although the open dormitory plan of the Progressive Era was abandoned for double height cellblocks, the arrangement of buildings within a quadrangle, the Colonial Revival style of

architecture and the high level of architectural detailing are representative of the same design philosophy. The penitentiary quadrangle is comprised of six-gable end cell buildings with decorative parapets and false chimneys, three on each side of a large dining hall. An arcade extends down both sides of the open-ended quadrangle with arched porticos accentuating the entrance to each cell building.

PENITENTIARY AREA				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
P-01	Cellblock #1	1930	15,695	Y
P-02	Cellblock #2	1935	12,138	Y
P-03	Cellblock #3	1935	14,574	Y
P-04	Cellblock #4	1935	14,700	Y
P-05	Cellblock #5	1935	14,574	Y
P-06	Cellblock #6	1935	14,700	Y
P-07	Control Cells (7 ea.)	1935	1,000	Y
P-08	Tower #5	1940	1,073	Y
P-09	Tower #6	1940	1,082	Y
P-10	Tower #7	1940	1,094	Y
P-12	Dining & Kitchen	1935	14,955	Y
P-13	Offices	1935	6,400	Y
P-14	Offices	1935	6,400	Y
P-16	Control Center	1935	1,800	Y
H-41	Laurel Hill House	1766	3,013	Y
Totals			123,198	

Figure 10: Contributing Structures in Penitentiary Area

The one and a-half story brick buildings have a simple gable end plan and feature centered arched openings on the southern elevations. Entrance doorways, including fanlights and sidelights, are placed below a second story round arched window. Two rectangular windows are placed on each level on either side of each opening. Along the east and west elevations, each of the first story windows is paired with a gabled dormer. A total of nine dormers penetrate the low-pitched gable roof on each of the side elevations.

The integrity of each entrance varies; some have replacement doors while others retain the original round arched transom window with decorative tracery. Physical evidence suggests that changes were made over time. The masonry work, for example, indicates the alteration of windows and doors.

Five guard towers are incorporated into the brick wall which surrounds the penitentiary complex. The towers are octagonal in shape and have either octagonal or concave roof. The 14 structures

in the penitentiary complex were constructed between 1930 and 1940 and are listed as contributing to the proposed historic district.

The landscape within the quadrangle is minimal, with lawn areas and partially paved sidewalks and parking areas screening basic utilitarian purposes of the prison. A key view of this quad is from Silverbrook Road where the wall, towers and roofs of buildings are visible to passersby.

Although there is slight variation in the current condition and remaining integrity of each building located within the penitentiary quadrangle, each retains its original form with only minor alterations to the original fenestration. The buildings all maintain their original brick construction and over half the buildings have their original slate roof.

Two additional buildings are located east of the penitentiary, which is shown in Figure 7. Known as the Officers Quarters, these buildings are historically associated with the reformatory and the penitentiary. Designed as identical structures and sited parallel to each other, the two buildings are enclosed at one end to form a front-facing U ground plan.



Figure 12: Interior View of Quadrangle

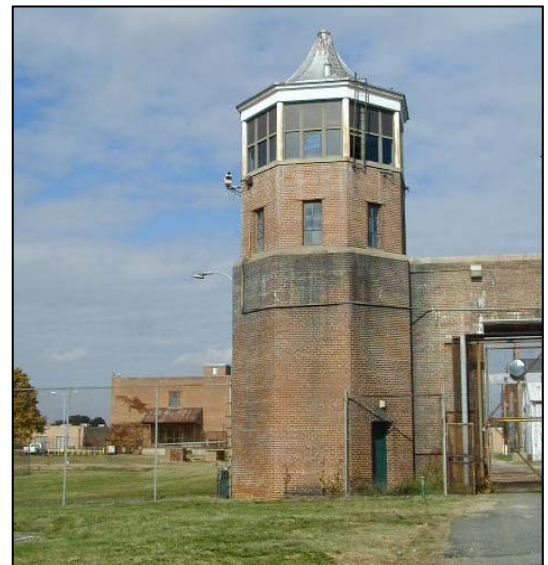


Figure 11: View of Octagonal Tower at the southwestern corner of the wall



Figure 13: View of Penitentiary Wall from Silverbrook Road

3.1.3 Redevelopment Area

The redevelopment area is located west of the penitentiary, north of the reformatory and on the south side of Silverbrook Road. The area is being redeveloped as an age restricted community. A total of 442 units that will house active adult units (age 55 and up) and independent senior units (age 62 and up) have been approved. Five of the existing historic buildings will be adaptively reused, including four brick dormitory structures and a former commissary. The list of contributing structures in this area is shown next in Figure 14.

REDEVELOPMENT AREA				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
R-66	Commissary/Dormitory	1939	37998	Y
R-70	Dormitory #15	1938	7500	Y
R-71	Dormitory #17	1938	7500	Y
R-72	Dormitory #16	1938	7500	Y
R-73	Dormitory #18	1938	7500	Y
Totals			67998	

Figure 14: Contributing Structures in Redevelopment Area

3.1.4 Occoquan Workhouse

A quadrangle consisting of a series of rhythmically placed buildings with symmetrical massing, forms the central area of the workhouse complex. The quadrangle is surrounded by a diverse collection of shop buildings, agricultural structures and residential buildings. Figure 15 lists the contributing structures in this area.

The site plan and the architectural detailing of each building are expressive of the progressive ideas of prison design prominent at the time of construction. As part of the progressive era ideals, there were no walls surrounding the complex and prisoners were housed in dormitory style buildings, with large open interior spaces. Originally the workhouse complex was constructed as an industrial farm; the idea of prisoner reformation through education and work was central to the philosophy behind the progressive reform of the penal system. There was also an attempt to recreate society within the prison, leading to the construction of educational facilities, assembly halls, hospitals, and recreational facilities (including a baseball field).

The workhouse quadrangle utilizes the Colonial Revival style. Ten dormitory buildings, an assembly hall and a two-story dormitory comprise the open-ended quadrangle of the workhouse. An arched portico extends along the north and south sides of the quadrangle, accentuating the entrance to each of the dormitory buildings. The dining hall, located at the eastern end of the quadrangle, includes a gabled entry portico, fluted pilasters and entablatures. Dormers rhythmically punctuate the side-gabled roof, with parapets located at each end. The portico and the dormers both feature cornice returns.

Two administrative buildings are located at the west end of the quadrangle; originally the arcade extended to include these two buildings. There is a high level of character defining detail evident within each of these one and a half story brick buildings. Both buildings have retained their original slate roof. Each side gabled roof form has dormers with arched windows and decorative tracery. Elliptical fanlights and sidelights accentuate the main entrances. There is a close resemblance between these structures and the two buildings (Officers Quarters) located east of the penitentiary.

The complex also includes several agricultural and farm buildings. Some of these structures surround the quadrangle area while others are located in the agricultural landscape of open fields and pastureland. Although farming operations have ceased, many of the original farm structures associated with the workhouse complex remain intact, including the livestock stalls located with the ca. 1925 livestock barn. The stalls contribute to the determination of the significance for the interior of the barn.

Several residential buildings are also associated with the workhouse complex. In addition to the building massing, window patterns, and exterior brick, interior features add to the significance of these buildings. Contributing interior features include intact original woodwork, interior doors and fireplace mantles.

An American foursquare house of brick construction, ca. 1929, is located immediately south of the workhouse quadrangle. The two and a half story building includes hipped dormers and a large front porch with square columns. In addition to the contributing interior elements, the brick building also features a transom over the front door and segmental arched windows. Alterations include a rear addition.

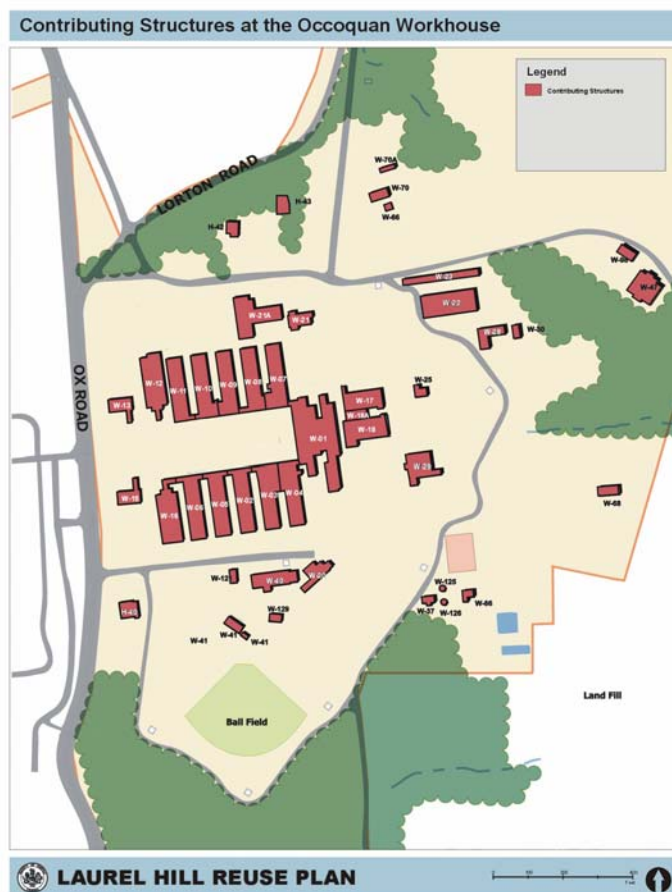
Figure 15: Contributing Structures in Occoquan Area

OCCOQUAN WORKHOUSE				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
H-40	Residence (Drug Testing)*	1929	2,706	Y
H-42	Residence (Medical Service)	1929	2,007	Y
H-43	Residence (Psych Service)	1930	4,065	Y
H-49	Residence (Education Ser)	1930	4,094	Y
W-01	Dining & Kitchen	1930	14,826	Y
W-02	Dormitory*	1930	9,310	Y
W-03	Dormitory #11*	1925	9,450	Y
W-04	Dormitory #10	1925	7,680	Y
W-05	Dormitory #9*	1925	8,520	Y
W-06	Dormitory #8*	1925	9,180	Y
W-07	Dormitory #5 & Chapel*	1930	8,340	Y

OCCOQUAN WORKHOUSE				
BUILDING ID#	BUILDING USE	YEAR BUILT	FLOOR AREA (SQFT)	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
W-08	Dormitory #4*	1930	8,520	Y
W-09	Dormitory #3/Storage*	1930	8,760	Y
W-10	Dormitory #2*	1930	8,860	Y
W-11	Dormitory #1*	1930	8,460	Y
W-12	Gymnasium*	1930	10,120	Y
W-13	Ed. Svc. Offices*	1930	3,350	Y
W-15	Ass't Dir. Office*	1932	3,560	Y
W-16	Dormitory #6/7 (Upper)*	1955	19,220	Y
W-17	Gym 1st Floor/Dormitory*	1925	13,160	Y
W-18	Dormitory #17/18 (Upper)*	1930	18,100	Y
W-18A	Connecting Addition*	1960	3,740	Y
W-20	Locomotive/Fire*	1920	2,250	Y
W-21	Control Building	1931	5,442	Y
W-21A	Admin. Bldg.	1941	10,754	Y
W-22	Barn (1st/2nd Fl)*	1925	21,860	Y
W-23	Equipment Storage (Farm)*	1925	5,020	Y
W-25	Security*	1925	1,100	Y
W-28	Equipment Repair (Farm)*	1926	3,150	Y
W-29	Heating Plant. (OFACM)*	1927	6,500	Y
W-30	Equipment Storage (Farm)	1926	800	Y
W-37	Building "H"	1930	867	Y
W-40	OFACM Shops	1940	10,400	Y
W-41	Ball Field. Grand Stand	1925	3,759	Y
W-47	Slaughter House/Farm	1920	6,347	Y
W-66	Storage Shed (Farm)	1935	468	Y
W-68	Farm Bldg.	1930	1,715	Y
W-70	Greenhouse (Farm)*	1930	1,590	Y
W-70A	Landscape Admin.	1930	300	Y
W-86	?	1930	917	Y
W-98	Former Slaughterhouse Bl	1920	1,473	Y
W-121	Recreation Office	1930	20	Y
W-125	Sewage Tank #1	1930	537	Y
W-126	Sewage Tank #2	1930	537	Y
W-129	Storage Shelter for Piggery	1940	857	Y
Totals	*estimates by Hitt Construction		272,691	

Residential buildings include three cottages within the workhouse complex. The one and a half story, gabled ell buildings all share the same original plan and features associated with the vernacular Cape Cod building type. Constructed in 1929 and 1930, two of the buildings located north of the workhouse quadrangle are brick construction. The third cottage, located south of the quadrangle, is wood siding and stucco. All three of the buildings retain their original roof form, with dormers on both the front and rear. Alterations include enclosed, or partially enclosed, rear porches. There is a mixture of historic and replacement windows although two of the buildings retain the original slate roof. All three buildings have been determined to have contributing interior features.

All of the buildings associated with the workhouse complex retain their original form with only minor alterations to the original fenestration. With the exception of the assembly hall, all of the buildings located in the quadrangle retain their original slate roof. The dominant material used in the construction of the workhouse complex was brick, made by the prisoners in the kilns located on the prison property. Many of the historic brick structures were constructed as replacements for the original frame prison buildings. Additionally, several of the original “Washington Standard” light fixtures remain along the road leading to the main entrance of the quadrangle complex. Although the top portion of these fixtures has been altered to accommodate high intensity lighting, the historic poles remain intact.



There are 47 historically significant buildings and structures within the workhouse complex. The complex contains structures dating back to the 1920s, although construction continued through the 1930s and 1940s.

The landscape associated with the workhouse is similar to that of the penitentiary and reformatory. The site includes lawn areas and partially paved areas that serve the utilitarian needs of the prison.

Figure 16: Contributing Structures at the Occoquan Workhouse

Physical evidence indicates the location and overall size of the gardens that were historically associated with the workhouse complex. Located north, northeast of the workhouse quadrangle, the historic gardens include the former greenhouse and landscape administration building. The landscape administration building features regularly spaced windows with segmental brick lintels. Alterations include partially filled in large windows and a side addition. In conjunction with reuse of the site by the Lorton Arts Foundation, five contributing structures have been approved for demolition by the Fairfax County Architectural Review Board and Virginia Department of Historic Resources. These are: H42 and 43 (cottages), W21 (control building), W-21 (administration building) and W-40 (a shop building).

3.2 Historic Background

3.2.1 Lorton Correctional Complex

In its inception and initial years, the Lorton Correctional Complex was an expression, both in its physical plan and in its programs, of Progressive Era penal reform. The Progressives sought to cure the causes of crime, ghettos, dangerous workplaces, and unhealthful conditions, as well as to rehabilitate the deviant, by the use of settlement house, reformatories, and mental hospitals. Some Progressives looked to the environment (such as crowded immigrant ghettos) as the cause of problems while others looked for psychological explanations. All believed in treating problems through an individual, case-by-case approach rather than fixed and inflexible rules applied to masses of people (Rothman 2002:5-6). The Progressives rejected the earlier approach of prisons designed to isolate the inmate from all contaminating influences (in society and in his fellow prisoners) by creating “a highly disciplined and regimented routine” (Rothman 2002:117). These earlier prisons were also thought to be utopian, and their regularity and discipline was intended to counter the chaos of nineteenth-century America (Rothman 2002:117). The Progressives rejected the rules of silence, lock step, long work hours and isolation that were hallmarks of prisons. They sought to replicate the outside community within the prison by increasing contact with the community (fewer limits on correspondence and visits), increased educational opportunities (both vocational and scholarly), and increased amusements (Rothman 2002:118). All of these changes were to better prepare the prisoner to re-enter society as a productive member after his sentence was served.

In the early twentieth century, many prisons adopted some of these Progressive ideals, including the abolition of prisoners’ uniforms, lock step, mandatory silence, and convict leasing. In the 1909 Penal Commission Report, which recommended the creation of a District of Columbia workhouse and reformatory, many Progressive reforms were proposed, to create an institution whose “influence will go out for good or for evil in every direction and possibly to every nook and corner of the land. [The Penal Commission] wish [es] to see a system adopted which may become a model to all who are seeking to improve their own institutions and policies, and which shall be worthier to form a part of the law of a wise and just people” (United States Commission on the Penal Institutions of the District of Columbia 1909:28, as cited in Oakey 1988:73).

The District of Columbia workhouse and reformatory were initially designed as a “prison without walls” (cited as Stone nd:np in Oakey 1988:136) and were among the earliest prisons to

integrate Progressive ideals into their design and architecture. The prisoners initially lived in tents until temporary frame buildings could be erected. These temporary buildings were all one story and were well ventilated and had many windows, a drastic contrast from the typically dank and dark earlier prisons. The most innovative component of these initial buildings was the fact that there were no walls or watchtowers to secure the facility. Both the workhouse and reformatory operated on the “honor system.” This was to instill in the prisoner a sense of self-respect and of trust between the officers and the inmates as well as to recreate a normal society.

Permanent buildings were constructed for the workhouse beginning in the 1920’s. The workhouse was run as an industrial farm for prisoners who were serving shorter sentences and those judged not suitable for the reformatory: “men to whom hard work is the most dreaded form of punishment” (Oakey 1988:16-77). These men worked the 1150 acres of farmland, which included raising swine, beef and dairy cattle and cultivating vegetables, fruits and field crops. The prisoners lived in open dormitories, ate in a communal mess hall, had an assembly hall and recreation facilities.

After the temporary buildings for the Reformatory, built in 1915, proved such a success, construction of permanent buildings began. The reformatory was intended to house those prisoners who could not be released on probation but were “susceptible to good influences, capable of being trained to some useful form of labor, by being improved in body and mind and made more fit to meet the temptations of life” (United States Commission on the Penal Institutions of the District of Columbia 1909:16, as cited in Oakey 1988:75). The reformatory also provided a full day’s work for its inmates, in industrial shops, so that the prisoners would be released with the skills to be productive members of normal society. The reformatory inmates also lived in open dormitories, ate in a communal mess hall, had an assembly hall and recreation facilities.

In 1929, due to overcrowding and the placement of more hardened criminals within the reformatory, construction began on a walled area adjacent to the reformatory to serve as a penitentiary (Maximum Security). Within this area were cell blocks, a dining hall and some industrial shops (Oakey 1988:138).

3.2.2 Progressive Era Principles

Inspired by Progressive Era penal reforms, the prison complex at Lorton was initially built as a “prison without walls” (cited as Stone nd:np in Oakey 1988:136). The permanent buildings were built so as to “dispel suggestion of a penal institution” and are the realization of Progressive ideals of penal reform (Oakey 1988: 130).

The workhouse was built as an industrial farm, to “develop the land and, in doing so, to teach industry to the prisoners and improve them physically and otherwise” (Commissioners of the District of Columbia 1920:400-401). The construction of the workhouse on uncultivated farmland and the creation of agricultural facilities provided for prisoner development. The idea that prisoners could be reformed through education and work was a central tenet of Progressive Era penal reform.

The reformatory was planned as a place where offenders could be rehabilitated by “teach[ing] the unfortunate assurance, self-respect, and a more correct vision of that which means for the general betterment” (Commissioners of the District of Columbia 1920:413). As the prisoners in the reformatory were serving longer sentences than those at the workhouse, industrial education was the tool used for rehabilitation at the reformatory. Industrial shops for carpentry, broom-making, plumbing, baking, metal working, and other vocations were located behind the dormitory quadrangle along the industrial railroad that connected the complex to the Fredericksburg, Richmond and Potomac Railroad (Oakey 1988:131). The reformatory was sited as far as possible from the workhouse at the recommendation of the Penal Commission that reorganized the District of Columbia penal system. They intended the workhouse and reformatory to be separate, so that the reformatory inmate would “regard himself as not sunk to the level of the criminal classes, to preserve his self-respect so as to enable him to go out at the end of his term feeling that he has not been branded as a felon” (Oakey 1988:75).

Both the workhouse and reformatory attempted to recreate society within their facilities by housing the prisoners in dormitories, provided recreation facilities, assembly halls, education facilities and hospitals.

The penitentiary was enclosed within a high wall from the reformatory so that only the hardened criminals who were disrupting the honor system could be removed, while as many as possible could remain in the dormitory setting. While the penitentiary abandoned the open dormitories and lack of walls or watch towers that were an integral part of the Progressive program of the workhouse and reformatory, it did retain the overall arrangement of buildings as a quadrangle and the Colonial Revival architecture. Construction of the penitentiary allowed the reformatory to continue its Progressive ideals by separating a more difficult classification of prisoner from the general population. The idea of classifying prisoners, so as to individualize their treatment, was one of the hallmarks of Progressive penal reform.

Snowden Ashford, municipal architect for the District of Columbia, used the Colonial Revival style in his designs for the reformatory and his influence is evident in the workhouse. He employed the quadrangle plan of the facilities to make supervision easier and to alleviate the need for walls and watch towers (Oakey 1988:130). Other Progressive prisons were designed on similar plans, including Alfred Hopkins’ proposal for a New York State Prison and Albert Kahn’s proposed Detroit House of Correction. One key difference between these two plans and the plans for Lorton were that Lorton housed almost all of its prisoners in open dormitories (some punishment rooms and disciplinary dormitories were present at the workhouse and reformatory for those prisoners who violated the honor system), while the other two plans used mostly cell blocks. Both of Hopkins’ and Kahn’s prisons did share with Lorton the “psychology of attractive buildings” (Hart 1922:45-46, 55-59). By using conventional architectural styles and by discarding the heavy, barred windows and high walls, the prison emulated the larger community in form as well as in program. This approach was unusual in early twentieth-century prisons. By using the Colonial Revival style, reflecting northern Virginia and the District of Columbia’s prominent role in the founding of the United States and its growing appreciation for its colonial architecture, and by eliminating high walls and barred windows in the reformatory and workhouse, Ashford’s plan “dispels the suggestion of a penal institution” and created a

model of the local community as emphasized by Progressive penal reform (Oakey 1988:130). While the penitentiary did include the high wall and cell blocks rejected in the earlier workhouse and reformatory, it retained the quadrangle plan and Colonial Revival architecture used in the earlier facilities.

3.2.3 Statement of Significance

The Lorton Correctional Complex is significant under the National Register Criterion A as an early prison associated with Progressive Era reforms and ideals and with the Women's Suffrage movement of the early 20th century. It is also significant under Criterion C for its architectural design and construction, which are the physical expression of Progressive Era penal reforms.

The Lorton Correctional Complex was created as an expression, both in its physical plant and in its programs, of Progressive Era penal reform. The current brick buildings comprising the three complexes use conventional architectural styles to emulate the larger community in form as well as in programs. This approach was unusual in early twentieth-century prisons.

From June to December 1917, approximately 168 women, most members of the National Women's Party who were arrested for picketing the White House, were held in the temporary frame buildings of the women's prison, located west of Ox Road, opposite the Occoquan Workhouse. The abuse and ill treatment the suffragists received while at the women's prison helped to galvanize support for their cause. The frame buildings that housed these prisoners were demolished and the brick buildings built to replace them have also been demolished. The area is now part of the Fairfax County Water Authority property. It is not included in the proposed historic district.

The design of the workhouse and reformatory, used the Colonial Revival style, and eliminated the high walls and barred windows typical of other prisons of the period, and thus dispelled the "suggestion of a penal institution" while creating a model of the local community as emphasized by Progressive penal reform (Oakey 1988:130). The use of the Colonial Revival style reflected northern Virginia and the District of Columbia's prominent role in the founding of the United States and its growing appreciation for its colonial architecture. Both the workhouse and reformatory attempted to recreate a normal society within their facilities.

In the late 1930s and 1940s, there were dramatic changes in the prisoner population at the Lorton Correctional Complex. Those prisoners from the District of Columbia who had previously been sentenced to serve their time in the Federal prisons were being sent instead to Lorton to serve their sentences. These prisoners were serving longer sentences for more serious crimes than the rest of the prison population. Their presence in the reformatory disrupted the prisoner programs, and the penitentiary was built to house those prisoners who were less amenable to reform. Even though the penitentiary was built using cellblocks and an encompassing brick wall, both items that were rejected for the reformatory and workhouse, it did retain the architectural form, a quadrangle of Colonial Revival brick buildings, of these earlier Progressive buildings. This continuity of architecture remained even though the philosophy of prisoner treatment had changed. The ring of low towers that were built around the Reformatory and Penitentiary in

1940 was also at odds with the earlier Progressive ideal of no walls or towers, but they retained the brick architecture of the earlier complexes. As buildings such as the Reformatory gymnasium and administration buildings and the workhouse dormitories numbers 6 and 7, were added to the Workhouse and Reformatory complexes, they were built using the same architectural details and planning as used in the 1920s and early 1930s. Despite changes in treatment of some classes of prisoners, the architectural embodiment of Progressive ideals, the brick Colonial Revival architecture and quadrangle building arrangement, continued through the 1940s.